

**‘ĀHIHI-KĪNA‘U NAR
MANAGEMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP
DRAFT MEETING NOTES**

Monday, August 2, 2010
9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary
New Building: 726 South Kīhei Road, Kīhei, Maui

Purpose

This is the final meeting of the working group process to develop a draft management plan for ‘Āhihi-Kīna‘u NAR. The purposes of the meeting are to:

- Present an overview of working group comments received and resolve differences among them
- Prioritize plan objectives and actions
- Develop guiding principles for zoning and sustainable finance
- Continue discussion of strategic communications for plan

In Attendance

Nicole Galase (DOFAW), Betsy Gagne(DOFAW), Bill Evanson (DOFAW/NARS), Jeff Bagshaw (HALE), Meryl Cohen (HIHWNMS Volunteer), Kevin Nishimura (USACOE), Declan McCarthy (Makena Beach Resort), Cheryl King (HWF/KIRC), Miqe Klemme (Explore Maui), Pat Borge (Makena Stables), Aimoku and Pauline Pali (Ka Ohana O Kahikinui), Robert Lu‘uwai, Susan Thomson, Emily Fielding (TNC), Sean Marrs (TNC), Evelyn Wight (TNC), Roxie Sylva (TNC).

DOFAW	State Division of Forestry and Wildlife
HWF	Hawaii Wildlife Fund
HALE	Haleakalā National Park
HIHWNMS	Hawaiian Island Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary
KIRC	Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission
NARS	Natural Area Reserve System
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USACOE	Army Corps of Engineers

Overview

The meeting began at 9:00 a.m. with opening remarks and introductions. Bill acknowledged everyone’s help and TNC’s work in the planning effort, and especially thanked the advisory

group members for all the time, expertise and effort they have volunteered to write the draft management plan for 'Āhihi Kīna'u NAR.

Emily reviewed the day's agenda and gave a brief overview of the planning process to date and the planning timeline. Since the final plan will be vetted with the public, the time frame may need to be adjusted depending on the length of each required step and public input.

The group acknowledged that DOFAW staff will be tasked with implementing the plan over the next 5 or more years. To help DOFAW staff to implement priority projects the working group prioritized objectives and actions and developed guiding principles for zoning and sustainable finance.

2010 Planning Timeline:

July 15	Working group overview of plan
July 23	Working group/staff comments due
	Comments analysis
August 2	Working group discussion of plan
	Plan revisions
September/October	Advisory group and public input
	Comment analysis, plan revisions
November/December	NARSC and BLNR meetings
	Final plan

Present overview of working group comments received

Over 300 comments were received from 16 working group members and NARS staff. About 85% of these comments are simple corrections and refinements and will be integrated into the plan without further discussion. The working group reviewed 30 comments that required some additional discussion to resolve differences among them. The discussion points and revisions from these discussions will be incorporated into the final draft of the management plan.

Prioritize objectives and actions

The working group prioritized 13 objectives by splitting into three groups of four people each and using a consensus process to rank them from A-C (A= highest priority). The overall group then reconvened and finalized a prioritization of objectives, as shown below.

The criteria used to rank the objectives were:

- Urgency
- Sequential
- Importance
- Do-able
- Time needed

The objectives were categorized as:

Objectives	Rank
Objective H1- Reduce the negative impacts of visitors	A
Objective M1- Secure and sustain the level of human and financial resources needed	A
Objective A1- Control ungulate populations	A
Objective H2- Protect and stabilize cultural resource sites	A
Objective M3- Initiate and maintain strategic partnerships	A
Objective A2- Control top alien invasive plants and animals in terrestrial habitats	B
Objective A3- Control top alien invasive organisms in aquatic habitats	B
Objective H3- Preserve knowledge and promote awareness of the reserve	B
Objective L1- Maintain high coastal water quality	B
Objective M2- Provide on-site infrastructure to meet management needs	B
Objective A4- Actively restore native plant assemblages	C
Objective L2- Reduce upland development impacts	C
Objective L3- Prevent or minimize manmade light pollution within reserve boundaries	C

Prioritize actions For part 2 of the prioritization discussion, each working group member selected the top 10 of 44 strategic actions, under the 13 objectives. Each person placed a numbered sticker (from 1= most important to 10= least important) in priority order onto posters around the room listing all 44 actions. Using a weighted average, the group identified the following top 10 actions:

1. Set and manage visitor limits and access points
2. Implement protection and stabilization plans for high priority cultural resource sites
3. Implement and operate a volunteer program
4. Deter and remove ungulates out of the reserve
5. Establish and maintain visitor entry and passage systems
6. Identify strategic partnership needs under the plan
7. Implement a reserve sustainable financing plan by 2011
8. Hire a full-time reserve manager by 2011
9. Recruit partners in support of the plan's implementation
10. Investigate the most effective ways to address invasive and emerging threats

Guiding Principles for Zoning

The working group again broke into small groups. Each group discussed:

- Where the current zones are in the NAR; and
- What zones should be changed and why?

The overall group then reconvened and discussed each groups' outcomes.

Under the two-year NAR rules, there are currently 2 zones in the reserve: an open zone and a restricted access zone. The working group came to a consensus and will provide the recommendation to DOFAW to adopt the existing temporary zoning of the reserve. The working group recommended that this zoning be made permanent, with limited guided walks

and service projects into restricted areas. The working group feels the recommended zoning achieves the following:

- Decreases resource impacts
- Increases human safety
- Limits access and increases appreciation and support for open area
- Provides service and volunteer opportunities
- Provides guided educational walks

Guiding Principles for Sustainable Finance

The working group continues to strongly support a sustainable finance mechanism for the reserve, such as collection of an entry fee (Hawai'i residents exempted) or a guided hike fee. Collected funds should stay on-site and be used for management of the 'Āhihi Kīna'u NAR. The group suggests adopting sustainable finance best practices including the following:

1. Use fee revenues for quality improvements to trails, signs/maps, toilets, and other facilities;
2. Make small fee increases rather than making them in large jumps;
3. Use moneys for operational costs rather than as a control mechanism for visitor entry;
4. Retain and use money for specific park purposes, rather than for general revenues;
5. Use extra money for conservation of the area visited, and;
6. Provide abundant information to the public about the income earned and the actions funded through it.

For the guided hikes, working group members considered the relative benefits and drawbacks of whether to concession out the hikes, or let a ranger staff provide the hikes. The working group recommends the management plan include guiding principles for any entity managing the hikes (non-profit, for profit, or staff):

- Regular training
- Frequency of visitors are limited so as not to cause harm to resources
- Sufficient oversight by the agency (DOFAW)

For entry fee collection, in-house management is preferred. However, it may need to be through a concession as it is too resource intensive to manage in-house. Examples of staff required to manage entry fees include:

- Hanauma Bay employs 13 people just to staff cashier booths for entry fees
- Haleakalā has 7 staff and a machine for entry fee collection

Other discussion

The group discussed their role and the role of DOFAW with respect to the plan. While the plan was written based on working group input, and provides suggestions, actions, guidance, and more, the implementation of the plan is in DOFAW's purview. DOFAW will develop, implement and manage specific work plans for any actions taken. In addition, DOFAW will implement planning for items in the plan as needed, such as:

- Ungulate fencing
- Marine boundary review
- Limits/quotas for visitors

Other comments from the working group:

- Need more data on visitor use
- Need a process to come up with limits/quotas
- Manage area density
- How do we get better at reaching guide books authors?
- Need a lot more data on threats
- Reference and correlate data to justify management actions
- Actions need to be linked to science
- Threat to action link needs to be clear
- Need communication strategy for notes/guide books
- Need entry points for snorkeling
- Monitoring plan
- Need to reference and correlate data in order to take management actions
- Revise threat table/ reference/ need link
- Abundance of Roi/ specify
- Install a (very secure) box where visitors can donate money to the A-K NAR
- Input a volunteer program to help rangers in the A-K NAR; needs to be more eyes to watch and report what's going down at the cove & dumps

Next steps

- TNC will work with NARS staff to incorporate comments and produce a final draft of the management plan
- Strategic communications group will develop key messages and communications tools for providing the plan to the public
- Place names will be reviewed by a small kūpuna group
- DRAFT SCHEDULE:
 - Draft plan goes to Advisory Group and the public for review (September)
 - Draft plan goes to:
 - Natural Area Reserves Commission (November 4 – meeting may be on Hawaii Island)
 - Board of Land and Natural Resources (December 9 is a possibility)
 - Note: NASC can override the BLNR if they deem any changes inappropriate

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.